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ABSTRACT

This paper focuses on student perceptions of sociology as a discipline, and the relevancy of course content to career goals and career preparation. The first part of the paper presents a summary of the literature and research on the employment situation in sociology. The summary implies that (1) departments of sociology are overproducing for the limited market demand; (2) there is a demand for sociologists in many nonacademic areas; (3) there has been a void in the educational experience of students in field or applied sociology; and (4) there is uncertainty as to what goals should be achieved at the undergraduate level. The second part of the paper discusses a study to seek answers to numerous questions about the varied procedures, operations, and functions within the Department of Sociology at East Texas State University (ETSU). A questionnaire was administered to 60 senior undergraduate sociology and anthropology majors and minors at ETSU during 1975 as part of the intradepartmental evaluation. Analysis of the responses showed student concern about future employment in their chosen fields, and about the relevancy of some courses to the outside world. A desire for courses with field experience was also expressed. The author concludes that undergraduate and graduate sociology programs should be altered to provide more training in non-academic sociology career possibilities and field experience. Universities and colleges should also play a greater role in locating non-academic job possibilities. (DRS)

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ATTITUDES OF STUDENTS TOWARD THE DISCIPLINE OF SOCIOLOGY:

OCCUPATIONAL AND EDUCATIONAL CONCERNS

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INTRODUCTION

In recent years there has been growing criticisms directed toward many disciplines within the institutions of higher education in the United States. This criticism has been increasingly directed at and discussed in the discipline of sociology (Campbell, 1970). The discussions range from the lack of applied or occupational relevance in sociology programs (Dunphy, 1974) to the lack of quality instruction and the unclear goals of undergraduate and graduate education (W. Bates, 1969; A. Bates and Reid, 1971; Campbell, 1970; E. Harris, 1975; Leibert and Bayer, 1975; Orzack, 1974; and Zelan, 1974). This interest and concern has provided the impetus within the discipline of sociology to address the acute problems and to seek logical and productive solutions for them. In this area, institutions of higher education, departments of sociology throughout the country, and the American Sociological Association (ASA) were in the process of evaluating and assessing the curriculum, the instruction provided, and the career preparation received at all degree levels within the profession of sociology (A. Bates and Reid, 1971; Panian and Defleur, 1975; and Zelan, 1974).

After noting the national concern in the above areas a study was conducted to seek answers to numerous questions about the varied procedures, operations, and functions within the Department of Sociology at East Texas State University (ETSU). These included academic reputation on campus, career preparation, course variety, quality of classroom instruction, relevance of course content to career goals, commitment of departmental faculty to their professional ethics, and the discipline of sociology. Students were asked to give their opinion on the above subjects and to recommend changes.

The focus of this paper was on students' perceptions toward the discipline of sociology, career preparation, relevance of course content to career goals and educational and occupational directions.

THE BACKGROUND OF THE PROBLEM

Within the recent past, sociology degree holders have been facing a drastically shrinking job market. At the April, 1976, Southwest Social Science meeting in Dallas, there were over one hundred applicants for some sixteen academically oriented job openings. This situation became more alarming when one reviewed employment openings listed in professional journals such as ASA's Footnotes. A substantial number of these employment bulletins require the applicant to hold the Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) degree or to have obtained the degree by the starting employment date. This can be interpreted to mean that there are very few jobs available for those individuals possessing a master's degree in sociology. Succinctly, the individual who holds a bachelor's degree finds himself or herself facing the same unemployment problem. The fact that there was an interest in this employment problem was substantiated by the existence of a number of professionals at all levels of the discipline and the number of professional societies who were involved in discussing and researching this growing problem.

In recent years the ASA has created a number of committees to assess the role and function of undergraduate sociology. Also, the ASA has been funding a research series on the profession of sociology and teacher development. One such study examined characteristics of nonacademically employed sociologists (Panian and Defleur, 1975). Otto Larsen, President of the ASA, stated in the publisher's note of the above research (American Sociological Association, 1975:3) that:

> The Panian and Defleur report comes at an opportune time. At present, nearly 200 American graduate departments are producing over 600 Ph.D.'s annually. The Academic workplace can no longer

absorb this talent. New professional opportunities must be developed. In a clear and crisp fashion, this study points to many of the problems that educators, professional associations and individuals much confront to advance this development.

Orzack (1974) reported concerns similar to those expressed by Larsen. The graduate students in sociology at Rutgers University were expressing a great concern as to whether there would be academic teaching positions open for them when they completed their studies. In response to this concern, the Department of Sociology at Rutgers set up an ad hoc committee on alternative careers. The basic function of this committee was to assemble and disseminate information on jobs and employment outside the university environment.

From an international perspective, similar concerns have been expressed. At a recent meeting of the Australian and New Zealand Sociological Association, President Dexter Dunphy confronted the membership with the pressing issue of putting sociology to work. Dunphy (1974:3) viewed the problem of unemployment as a reluctance of sociologists to become actively involved in the social issues and the amelioration of social problems outside academe.

From this brief overview, it was apparent that students from the discipline of sociology were faced with a serious problem in finding employment.

PROBLEM AREAS OF SOCIOLOGY

Research studies concentrated on many of the issues discussed in the background of the problem. The studies number into the hundreds and because of this volume of material it was necessary to limit the projects reviewed to a smaller number of studies relevant to this present research.

Unemployment Problem and Future Outlook

The present unemployment rate and occupational outlook for sociologists

are extremely stark. In comparing the past and present and predicting the future, two studies present striking dissimilarities.

Ferriss (1968) suggested that the supply would not keep up with the demand in the 1970s. Ferriss (1968:233) stated: "The colleges and universities will need eighty-five percent more sociologists in 1974-75 than they employed ten years earlier." This prediction was well founded when one studied the programs and social services being provided and in the process of development during the late 1960s. However, the predictions failed to take into account the reduction of the social services and the drastic turn the economy took in the early 1970s. If the political and economic problems, both foreign and domestic, had not increased and the social services had not been viewed as harmfully socialistic, it would be safe to assume that the demand for sociologists would now be great. However, the problem the society faced was in dealing with the existing conditions. The unemployment problem among sociologists was drastically intense.

McGinnis and Solomon (1973:60) suggested that the "number of doctorate sociologists is growing substantially more rapidly than is demand." The projected ratio of new Ph.D.'s, by 1975, in the labor market to the number of new graduate teaching positions was three to one. By 1980, if the present trend continues, this ratio can be expected to reach seven to one (McGinnis and Solomon, 1973:60). The implications of this study are quite apparent. McGinnis and Solomon (1973:61) stated:

> . . . even with necessary reservation, two conclusions, from this and related research are sufficiently clear to serve as a basis for deriving policy implications. First, relative to projected demand in graduate academia, an oversupply of Ph.D. sociologists is being produced. Second, the maintenance of graduate sociology programs, particularly the volume of Ph.D. production, is heavily dependent on federal funds.

Sociology departments in various schools needed these funds to maintain their

programs. Consequently, the departments of sociology continued to produce graduate students to help with the "busy work" that was prevalent in these grants. The fact that sociology has been overproducing has had a drastic effect upon persons who possess bachelor's and master's degrees in sociology. With the competition stiff for academic jobs at the Ph.D. level, some Ph.D.'s have taken jobs that would normally be held by master's degree holders. This situation in turn has had a snowballing effect on the undergraduate bachelor's degree holder's chances of securing a job. This evidence of overproduction suggested that if the situation continued the only apparent alternative for those who wished to do the work of a sociologist would have been to plan to spend much time and money in the pursuit of a Ph.D. and to face the possibility of tremendous competition after graduation.

This overproduction was helped to a great degree by the evidence that many schools have not developed or instituted any methods to alleviate this problem. Michael (1976) found that top or high prestige schools reduced the number of Ph.D.'s produced, while less prestigious schools increased the number of Ph.D.'s granted. Michael (1976:4) stated "In general, the number of new Ph.D.'s continues to grow rapidly each year." The implications of these data were increasingly important. With the continued overproduction and the apparent reluctance of universities to take steps to remedy the situation, program changes were needed. The undergraduate student must be encouraged and provided with applied experience to enable the bachelor's degree holder to find employment upon graduation. This could possibly reduce the large number of students turning to graduate school as an alternative occupation due to the lack of jobs available to them with the possession of the undergraduate degree only.

Non-Academic Employment of Sociologists

Within the past ten years, the demand for the applied use of sociology increased. Business, government, and industry started the process of inquiry on the societal impacts and consequences of some of their new programs and developments. Dunphy (1974) related some of the varied requests his office received. The requests for assistance covered most areas in which sociologists claim to exhibit expertise. Among the requests (Dunphy, 1974:3) were:

> 1. A firm of consulting engineers wants an urban sociologist to help them plan decentralized cities and residences. Plus the assistance of a full-time resident sociologist in the implementation.
>
> 2. A conservation body wants a sociologist to conduct a survey of community attitudes to factory buildings in an urban area.
>
> 3. A government body set to study crime wants to employ sociologists to collect and analyze crime statistics.
>
> 4. Many business firms and government departments want change-agents who can work to change the operation of traditional bureaucracies.

It is apparent that business and industry attempted to acquire help in assessing the impact of programs of current practices. Why did sociologists not become more actively involved in this problem-solving role? One apparent answer appeared to be the failure of the profession to educate students at all levels about the advantages of employment outside academe.

Non-academic occupations were those positions not related to the academic community, such as teachers or researchers employed directly or indirectly by a university. Numerous misconceptions developed about the sociologist employed outside the academic community.

Panian and Defleur (1975) researched the area of non-academic employment and the non-academic sociologists' views and attitudes toward their positions.

It was found that numerous negative aspects of non-academic sociologists were myths. Several negative aspects of non-academic employment are listed below.

1. The non-academic sociologist lacks academic freedom and may have research efforts used in subversive or questionable ways.

2. The non-academic sociologist was less content in his or her position than was the academic sociologist.

3. There was less stature in non-academic occupations held by sociologists.

4. Sociologists in these non-academic positions were less creative and competent when it came to the use of sociological theory and research methods.

5. The non-academic occupations offered little challenge to the academically trained sociologist.

6. The work done by non-academic sociologists was quite burdensome.

All the above myths were not verified by the research done by Panian and Defleur. The only areas that were stated as being negative, as far as non-academic employment was concerned, were under the headings of work and scheduling freedom and bureaucratic demands. A frequently cited advantage of academe was the work schedules and the freedom to set one's own hours. This was not available in the non-academic setting. This area was cited most often as being a negative aspect of non-academic employment. Under the heading of bureaucratic demands, the respondents expressed some dissatisfaction with the amount of red tape involved in decision-making and operational procedures. It must be noted that there was no clear consensus on this issue or any of the issues listed as negative characteristics of non-academic employment.

These negative reports were quite diminutive aspects when all the myths and misconceptions that pervaded the profession of sociology were compared. It can be logically assumed that these myths not only affected the general attitudes about non-academic sociologists but also inhibited the development of programs of instruction, effectively diminishing the development of prospects for students in the non-academic work place.

The Problem of Teaching Sociology

The problem concerning non-academic employment of sociologists was furthered by the teaching of sociology at both the graduate and undergraduate levels. Since the problem of this study was the undergraduate program at ETSU, the problem of teaching sociology will be restricted to the undergraduate level, particularly concerning the lack of field learning experiences.

The traditional undergraduate student has been introduced to many terms and concepts, but the opportunities to put these to use in a real world situation were almost non-existent. Students basically learned the procedures, theories, and methods of sociology, but seldom experienced putting classroom learning to work in a field situation. Campbell (1970:36) stated:

> There is a vast void and discontinuity between soiology as given to students in basic courses and sociology practiced at its best and most stimulating levels, more so than in most disciplines.

If the student were in a university that maintained a graduate program, he or she might have discovered that the graduate students were engaged in something called "research." However, as Campbell (1970:36) further related:

> . . . the student is cheated of the sense of continuity, of the pursuit of problems attacked now at more expert levels and with more expert tools than in his earlier training, of the continuing to value his undergraduate training.

By reducing these gaps and making undergraduate education more realistic

to the employment world and its demands for some type of occupational expertise, a student with an undergraduate degree in sociology could, in many cases, become employed with the bachelor's degree and not be forced to continue his or her education at the graduate level in order to learn more fully the skills involved in sociological investigation. This could indirectly open up new areas of instruction for the undergraduate programs and reduce the large and increasing number of academically unemployed Ph.D.'s. Campbell (1970:37) stated:

> I submit that we shall have accomplished much toward solving the manpower problem in sociology when we stop hiding its creative, rigorous face from undergraduate students, when we stop teaching it as a passive discipline to which students listen, when we teach it instead as an active discipline that students practice.

The problem of relevance in teaching has been further impaired by the confusion on the goals of undergraduate education.

Goals of Undergraduate Education

Within the discipline of sociology there was little organization or clarity on what goals should be achieved in an undergraduate education in sociology. Several studies have attempted to ascertain particular goals of both institutions and individuals involved in the teaching of sociology both on the graduate and undergraduate level. The review of these studies was restricted to those that were relevant to the undergraduate education. These were Leibert and Bayer (1975), Reid and A. Bates (1971), and Zelan (1974).

Leibert and Bayer (1975) studied the relationship between the goals of individual instructors and the goals of the institutions in which they taught. The most interesting aspect of this research was how the instructors viewed the goals of undergraduate sociology. Leibert and Bayer separated the goals

of undergraduate education into two distinct categories. The first, "professional centered," was the goals associated with the educating of students for graduate school or research related positions at the graduate level. This term could be properly termed a "Pure" or value free orientation. The second, "client centered," was the goals associated with educating and providing the student with training and expertise that could be put to use immediately upon graduation. This type of training could justifiably be termed "Applied" or value-oriented. When the data were compiled and analyzed, the rank-order of all goals was found to be that the professional-centered goals were ranked above the client-centered goals by the entire sample of 1,074 instructors of sociology. The evidence from the above study suggested that most instructors saw the goals of teaching sociology at the undergraduate level basically as preparation of the students for graduate school or the reproduction of students for future professional openings in sociology.

Reid and A. Bates (1971) found comparable evidence to that of Leibert and Bayer (1975). Reid and A. Bates (1971:173) discovered that the dominant role of the sociology program was to contribute to the liberal education of the students. Seventy-one percent of the sample reflected this view, while another 21 percent viewed the dominant role or goal of undergraduate education as being that of preprofessional training leading to graduate work in sociology. In general, most of the instructors saw the role of undergraduate education as one of preprofessional training or contribution to the university liberal arts requirements in individual colleges and universities. As was apparent in Leibert and Bayer (1975) there was little emphasis placed on the applied aspects of the educational process in sociology.

Zelan (1974) studied the problem of discontinuity of goals of undergraduate education from the views of students, instructors, and institutions,

and the level of interest and satisfaction that sociology students manifested toward their coursework. Zelan (1974:12) categorized sociology students in his sample of 1,327 into different categories to assess and evaluate their opinions on the undergraduate goals and training received. The first category in Zelan's study, which he termed "Generalists," was undergraduates who were not interested in specialization or the development of skills for immediate employment after graduation. These undergraduates looked to graduate school to provide the specialization. In the second category, "Vocational Specialists," the respondents viewed college as a place for the preparation for immediate employment upon receipt of one's degree. The vocational specialist saw a great need for the development of skills and specializations that would enhance employment opportunities upon graduation. One of the most interesting findings was that the majority of the students expressed general educational orientation. Another finding was that males were generalists more often than were females. Zelan (1974:14) suggested that this orientation was due to the fact that most women in sociology went into social work and therefore did not particularly view a need for graduate work.

A final aspect of Zelan's study was the attitudinal differences expressed by the generalists and vocational specialists toward interest and satisfaction in their chosen programs. Generalists were significantly more interested in their courses than were the vocational specialists (Zelan, 1974:16). Seventy-seven percent of the generalists disagreed with the statement "I am not interested in most of my courses." Only 52 percent of the vocational specialists disagreed with the same statement. There was also disparity in the satisfaction with college between the generalists and vocational specialists. Twenty-seven percent of the generalists were very satisfied

with their college education, while only 11 percent of the vocational specialists reflected similar satisfaction.

The above evidence suggested that many departments of sociology are serving two distinct markets. Zelan (1974:17) suggested that sociology was and should remain oriented toward the ideal of general education of sociology majors at the undergraduate level. It was apparent that sociology should remain in the domain of general education. However, there should be an increased emphasis on the development of new applied goals to meet the growing demand for occupational relevance at the undergraduate level. Succinctly, a partial solution lay in the clarification and modification of the present goals at the undergraduate level. This would have necessitated departments offering more applied emphasis in selected areas, in addition to those offered by social work. Before the above could take place a consensus must have been attained on the requirements of coursework at the undergraduate level.

In summation of the literature and research compiled in this paper, several conclusions can be drawn.

First, the unemployment situation in sociology is very critical and it appears that it will not abate in the near future. As a profession, we are over producing for the limited market demand.

Second, there is a demand for sociologists in many non-academic areas. However, numerous myths have developed concerning sociology outside academe. These myths may have caused many individuals and many university programs to avoid taking advantage of the prospects of non-academic employment opportunities.

Third, teaching of sociology has been largely restricted to the classroom experience. There has been a void in the educational experience due to the lack of field or applied application of sociology. Undergraduate

students have not offered enough of the "doing" aspects of sociology.

Finally, there appears to be a lack of clarity on what goals should be achieved at the undergraduate level. Should the undergraduate sociology major be prepared for graduate school or immediate employment upon graduation? This question is becoming increasingly important in light of the present unemployment situation in the discipline. We appear to be serving two distinct markets. Yet, the applied market is being sadly neglected.

METHODOLOGY

As initially stated in the introduction, this study was part of a larger assessment of the entier Department of Sociology and Anthropology at ETSU. The study was of a descriptive nature and data were collected via questionnaire. The questionnaire was administered to a majority of senior undergraduate sociology majors and minors for the purpose of collecting demographic data, attitudinal data, and other relevant data related to the assessment and evaluation of the sociology program within the Department of Sociology and Anthropology at ETSU.

THE POPULATION AND THE SAMPLE

The population of the present study was composed of senior undergraduate sociology majors and/or second majors in the Department of Sociology and Anthropology at ETSU during the Fall semester of 1975. This study was restricted to the sociology program within the department. From a print-out received from the university computer center, it was determined that there were eighty students within the above stated criteria. From this population of eighty students, responses from each of sixty were obtained.

DATA COLLECTION DEVICE

The questionnaire administered to the senior students was compiled from questionnaires administered by E. Harris (1975), S. Harris (1972), Miller (1970), and Schultz (1973), and suggested survey questions received from instructors in the Department of Sociology and Anthropology at ETSU.

COLLECTION OF DATA

A pre-test was administered to one section of introductory research methods prior to the administration of the final instrument. The instrument was administered in all classes that were required for students majoring or minoring in sociology, law enforcement, or social work. Each instructor of the required classes was contacted prior to the time of administration to obtain permission for visiting the class and to make an appointment for the specific class period. The questionnaire was administered to twelve classes in the Department of Sociology and Anthropology.

Each of the scheduled classes was visited, an explanation of the nature of the study was made, and then the instrument was administered. The students were not required to participate in responding to the questionnaire and several declined to do so. Other students in the population were unable to be contacted with the above stated procedure, creating a reduction in the number of responses. Of those responding, five failed to complete the questionnaire, resulting in the invalidation of five instruments. A final response from sixty persons was obtained.

FINDINGS

In the Department of Sociology and Anthropology at ETSU students were required to take four basic courses. These were Introduction to Sociology, (Soc. 111), Social Problems (Soc. 112), Introduction to Social Research (Soc. 231), and Introduction to Sociological Theory (Soc. 426). Most students (80%) in the sample of sixty had taken all of these courses.

General demographic characteristics on the students revealed the following. Fifty-three percent were male and 47 percent were female. Racial composition of the sample revealed that 74 percent were White, 18 percent were Mexican-American, and 8 percent were Black. The age range of the respondents was from twenty to thirty-eight. The median age was twenty-three, with the modal age being twenty. Fifty-three percent of the sample were single, 37 percent were married, and 10 percent were divorced. Forty percent of the sample indicated that they commuted to ETSU, while 22 percent lived on campus, and the remaining 38 percent lived in the Commerce, Texas area. Analysis of respondents' religious preferences indicated that 71 percent expressed Protestant beliefs. This category included the following religions: Baptist, Church of Christ, Methodist, and Presbyterian. Forty-seven percent of the senior students had attended a community college prior to their attendance at ETSU.

As indicated in the introduction this paper was concerned with students' perceptions toward the discipline of sociology, career preparation, relevance of course content to career goals, and probable occupational and career directions.

Attitudes Toward the Discipline

Students were asked to respond to a variety of statements about the discipline of sociology based upon their experience at East Texas State University.

Table 1

Attitudes of Senior Undergraduate Sociology Majors and Minors
Toward the Discipline of Sociology

Attitudes Toward Sociology In General	Attitudinal Response (N=60)			
	Strongly Agree %	Agree %	Disagree %	Strongly Disagree %
I am basically satisfied with my education in sociology	05	74	21	00
Sociology is too theoretically oriented	04	48	35	13
Sociology is too research oriented	08	29	58	05
I majored in sociology because the courses sounded interesting	03	45	42	10
I majored in sociology because I heard the courses were easy	00	05	58	37
Sociology courses should have field related experience	45	50	03	02

As indicated by the findings reported in Table 1, 79 percent of the respondents were satisfied with the education they received in the discipline of sociology; only 21 percent were dissatisfied with the education received. A second finding revealed that 52 percent of the senior students indicated that sociology was too theoretically oriented, while 48 percent indicated that it was not too theoretically oriented. This finding suggested that possibly some of these students did not completely understand or failed to grasp the essential part theory plays in sociology and for that matter, all disciplines. Another factor that could have affected the above finding was the possibility that the students had not taken theory at the time the survey was administered. Hence, the students lacked the exposure to the basic knowledge of theory to make an accurate statement of opinion. A third finding indicated that 37 percent of the respondents viewed sociology as being too research oriented, while 63 percent disagreed with this attitude. This finding might be explained by evidence ascertained in the larger study from which this paper was taken. This data revealed that more students had taken research methods than had taken theory. This leads to an assumption that the students who had taken research methods probably had more information and knowledge upon which to base their attitude. A fourth finding was related to the attitude of sociology being an interesting and an easy major in college. This idea has been expressed by some professionals in the literature within the discipline (Campbell, 1970). In the present research it was revealed that 48 percent of the respondents indicated that the interest aroused by the discipline was a factor in choosing sociology as a major. However, 95 percent of the respondents disagreed with the attitude of majoring in sociology because they heard it was an easy course of study. Given this evidence, the idea that students

major in sociology due to the ease of the discipline or the coursework was not supported by the respondents in this research. This response was certainly understandable given the realization that students would not want to readily admit that they had taken sociology because it was easy.

Finally, the strongest agreement was in response to the statement: "Sociology courses should have field related experiences." Ninety-five percent of the seniors agreed that sociology courses should have more field related experiences. The findings of the open-ended section of the questionnaire revealed that fifty percent of the respondents suggested that the department develop practical or field related courses in addition to those already offered by the social work program. Forty-eight percent of the respondents also suggested that the department should relate, as much as practical, courses to the applied aspects of finding a job in the area of emphasis in which the student has expressed an occupational interest. One interesting response was made in relation to finding a job in sociology. The student stated: "Why doesn't the department offer a course on how to get a job with a sociology degree?"

The above statement adequately summed up the responses to the open-ended section of the questionnaire. Students recommended that the department provide more applied relevance in courses and that there be an increased emphasis on developing means to assist students in finding jobs for undergraduate degree holders. As stated previously this concern with course orientation and employment was not restricted to ETSU. Solutions to these problems were explored in the discussion section of this paper.

A summary of this section revealed that the Department of Sociology and Anthropology did an adequate job of providing knowledge and education in the discipline of sociology to the students surveyed in this research. There was some evidence to suggest that there was confusion or lack of knowledge of the

roles theory and research play in the discipline of sociology. Finally, 50 percent of the students indicated that the interest aroused by the discipline of sociology was a factor in choosing sociology as a job in college.

Educational and Occupational Direction

Respondents (Table 2) were asked to list the occupation which they felt they would be going into in the next few years. Also, the respondents were asked if they would attend graduate school in the near future.

Thirty-seven percent of the respondents indicated that they would be seeking a career in criminal justice. Twenty-two percent indicated social work as a future occupation while the remainder listed occupational directions of either teaching in a secondary school (13 percent), teaching in a community college (12 percent), or other occupations (16 percent).

The question concerning graduate school attendance presented an interesting finding. Sixty-eight percent of the respondents indicated that they would attend a graduate school. This finding was judged to be unreliable due to two factors. First, few of the sociology students at ETSU enrolled into the local graduate program and second, the Department of Sociology and Anthropology received very few requests for letters of recommendations, which are an important part of any student's application for admission to graduate school. However, Winfree and Clinton (1977) have suggested that over 50 percent of the alumni of the department do pursue graduate work.

A summary of this section revealed that most of the sociology majors and/or second majors went into criminal justice or social work. As far as educational directions were concerned, a majority of the respondents indicated that they were going to graduate school in the near future.

Table 2

Educational and Occupational Directions of Senior Undergraduates
Sociology Majors and Minors

	Percent	Number (N=60)
Educational Directions		
Graduate School Attendance		
YES	63	38
NO	10	06
UNDECIDED	27	16
Occupational Directions		
Criminal Justice	37	22
Social Work	22	13
Teaching at the secondary school level	13	08
Teaching at the community college level	12	07
Others	16	10

SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION

The students at East Texas State University have suggested that they were concerned about employment and the relevance of some of the courses they have taken. They have suggested courses with field related experiences. Other colleges and universities have encountered the same reaction. A number of pieces of research are now available hopefully to provide answers and suggestions to this problem.

In January of 1974, a group of sociologists met to discuss the problems of undergraduate education. This workshop was sponsored by a grant from the ASA and included professionals from community colleges, four-year institutions, and universities with graduate departments (American Sociological Association, 1974:3). Several task groups were selected and organized to accomplish the following: First, a group was charged with organizing and disseminating information about programs, resources, and requirements concerning the training of teachers in sociology (American Sociological Association, 1974:3). It was felt that this type of information would provide the graduate departments with objectives for training teachers for eventual placement in community colleges. Second, a group was set up to study concepts and objectives of the first course in sociology (American Sociological Association, 1974:9). It was hoped that this group could provide some consensus on the requirements for undergraduate training and coursework. Finally, a third group was organized to develop materials and guidelines to assist departments to meet the needs for facilities, personnel, library holdings, and other educational resources that are components of the educational environment in which sociology is taught (American Sociological Association, 1974:9). The workshop and its

accomplishments were met with such great acclaim and success that a section was created and expanded for the annual meetings of the ASA.

As previously discussed above in the section entitled "Non-Academic Employment of Sociologist," there were several grants provided by the ASA to study and research the numerous areas in the profession of sociology. The research done by Panian and Defleur (1975) was one such project. In addition to the myths that were disspelled by Panian and Defleur, there were findings and recommendations presented in their study. Panian and Defleur surveyed a random sample of 121 non-academically employed sociologists. In their concluding remarks they listed implications for sociological educators toward the training of non-academic sociologists. The suggestions were strikingly similar to those expressed by the members of the symposium on the Sibley Report (W. Bates, 1969). The implications (Panian and Defleur, 1975:35) for sociological educators, pertinent to the present research were:

> 1. Non-academic sociologists need more training in methods, data analysis, statistics, and mathematics.
>
> 2. More attention should be given to practical skills--proposal writing, writing and editing, small group leadership, and policy formation.
>
> 3. Research experience should be provided either through intern programs or developing research capabilities within the department.
>
> 4. Theory courses should be modified to include practical consequences.

Most of these suggestions were directed at graduate programs in sociology departments. However, some of these proposals could be instituted at the undergraduate level. It must be understood that an effort to accomplish the implementation would be immense but not impossible. By the institution

of some of these proposals and exposing the undergraduate major to the non-academic occupational areas, he or she could develop a greater awareness of the opportunities outside academe and adjust his undergraduate and graduate programs to meet an occupational interest.

Besides the national efforts undertaken by the ASA, several universities conducted research into the problems and instituted changes within their departments. Both Indiana and Rutgers universities developed projects aimed at enhancing employment prospects of both graduate and undergraduate students.

Indiana University, under the direction of Edward Harris (1975), conducted a survey to determine how agencies desired prospective employees to be trained. The suggested areas of emphasis in teaching students at the undergraduate and graduate levels were: training in urban problem solving; the uses of sociological knowledge; competency in research methods and statistics; foreign language as a vocational skill; and understanding of the social habits and attitudes of urban racial and/or ethnic groups to whom the services are delivered (E. Harris, 1975:2). E. Harris emphasized that many departments could consider two alternatives for teaching at the undergraduate level. Besides the current undergraduate academic curriculum, there could be an applied program requiring a course in the uses of sociology and/or a practicum in an agency involving meaningful tasks under adequate supervision. This vocational education would not endanger the requirements of graduate application for an advanced degree (E. Harris, 1975:9). Besides the training areas listed above, there were several areas that should become available, such as social psychology, social gerontology, medical sociology, and social problem solving. Within the realm of political decision-making, urban governments may be needing sociologists to help in municipal programs and their impact on the community and government (E. Harris, 1975).

Rutgers University's Department of Sociology has begun a program internally to aid its students in securing employment information. Orzack (1974) related that the department took three steps to compile this information. First, the committee selected and contacted all heads of major state agencies and departments of government in New Jersey which were considered to be potential employers of sociologists. Second, numerous personal contacts were made at associations, groups, corporations, and community agencies, to solicit names of key persons and organizations which could provide opportunities for employment. Finally, federal agencies developed an information packet on the most efficient procedure to obtain employment information.

The current work in the area suggests that programs should include more non-academic training at both the undergraduate and graduate levels, survey their regional areas for possible employment opportunities, and assist graduates in finding employment. The East Texas State University surveys certainly suggest that students were interested in these areas.

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